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ABSTRACT

Directed to the educational community of British Columbia, this booklet introduces the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) system. Included are a description of the system, a list of local contacts, cost information, instructions on organizing and interpreting computer searches, a description of ERIC indexes, and a list of recent references describing ERIC. (EMH)

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ERIC in B.C.

An Introduction to the Use of ERIC

HOW TO PLAY HIDE AND SEEK — THE INFORMATION STORAGE AND RETRIEVAL GAME

This booklet is designed to acquaint members of the educational community of British Columbia with the Education Resources Information Center system. Ready access to computer searching of the ERIC data base is now available in British Columbia. This service will permit teachers, course developers, and researchers to obtain rapid and exhaustive searches of educational literature for a nominal fee.

Contacts, explanations, and methods are given within this booklet so that casual users will know how to obtain services and serious users can learn the basics of constructing searches designed to meet their unique requirements.

The information presented in this booklet is based on materials and ideas obtained from the Information/Knowledge Research Centre and a graduate education course at U.B.C. Dr. Edward Summers has been particularly useful and patient. The responsibility for accuracy and presentation of the material rests with the Co-ordinator of the B.C.I.T. Directed Study Centre.

W.D. Robertson,
Co-ordinator
Directed Study Centre

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What is ERIC?

The **Educational Resources Information Centre** is a system for collecting, cataloguing, and distributing information on educational literature. **ERIC** consists of sixteen centres or **Clearinghouses** each having the responsibility for acquisition and processing of specific sections of educational literature. Processing of journal articles, reports, and related educational literature includes the description of the items in such a way that they may be entered in an information storage and retrieval system called the **ERIC data base.** Information may be retrieved either by hand searching of special indexes or by computer-assisted searching.

What type of Information is in ERIC?

The sixteen clearinghouses collectively cover the entire spectrum of educational literature in the English language and include some non-English sources. The first material began to be collected in 1964. In 1974, over 700 journals were used to prepare more than 20,000 abstracts of articles related to education. The current number of journal articles abstracted and included in the **ERIC** data base exceeds 100,000. Almost any journal article related to education and which would appear in a journal published in the U.S.A. is reported in the **ERIC** system. Some coverage is also provided of journals from Canada and the U.K. The other source of documents can be described as the materials not normally included in journals or other widely distributed publications. These materials, often called "fugitive" documents because they appear briefly as a limited edition with very limited circulation, include research reports, curriculum guides, special institutional publications, position papers, conference proceedings, briefs, and bibliographies. During 1974, over 35,000 such documents were reviewed by the clearinghouses. Of these about 40% were processed and placed within the **ERIC** data base bringing the current number to over 85,000. The **Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors**, now containing approximately 6,000 cross referenced terms, is used to index the journal and report literature for retrieval purposes. Copies of over 80% of the documents included in the system may be obtained in microfiche or printed copy from a commercial supplier. Journal literature is announced in **Current Index to Journals in Education (CIJE)** while report literature is announced in **Resources in Education (RIE).** Both are monthly publications.

How do I obtain information from ERIC?

There are two approaches to obtaining a computer search of the **ERIC** data base. Interested users can consult:

Dr. Edward Summers,
Information/Knowledge Research Centre,
Faculty of Education,
University of B.C.,
Vancouver, B.C.
(604) 228-6229

and have a search run on their topic of interest.

This approach involves minimal knowledge of the technical aspects of the system. People selecting this method must have a clear understanding of what information is to be retrieved and what is to be excluded. For example, you may be considering the use of simulations in the teaching of interpersonal skills to a group of young adults. Do you want to search out all the possible literature on simulations? Or teaching of interpersonal skills? Or simulations used in teaching interpersonal skills? Do you wish to stipulate that only college or university level studies are of interest? When these questions have been answered, the search can focus on your specific area of interest.

In the second method of obtaining information from **ERIC**, which requires a more detailed understanding of how the system functions, the user designs the search. Information on the construction of searches is presented in another part of this brochure.

If you do decide to construct your own searches it is useful to understand how the documents are entered into the system. When a document is processed by a Clearinghouse, one part of the processing includes the assigning to the document of a series of "Descriptors". Descriptors are those words or phrases which have been approved for use in the **ERIC** system and which are listed in the **ERIC Thesaurus**. The cataloguer selects the descriptors which best relate in some way to the content of the document. Typical documents may have over fifteen descriptors of which five are known as "major" descriptors. (These are signified with an asterisk on the computer-generated resume.) The **ERIC** system is programmed to recognize only accepted descriptors and a few special words used to communicate the logic of the search to the computer.

What ERIC services are provided locally?

In British Columbia, the **ERIC** computer data base and total microfiche collection are held at the University of B.C. Both the University of Victoria and the B.C. Institute of Technology have staff who are familiar with the **ERIC** system and who are acting as resource people to students and faculty members. Many major libraries have copies of the **Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors** and the two **ERIC** indexes (**CIJE**) and (**RIE**) which may be used for a hand search of the data base. People wishing to gain access to the **ERIC** system should consult the **Information/Knowledge Research Centre** of the **University of B.C.**, the **Faculty of Education** of the **University of Victoria**, or the **Directed Study Centre** of the **B.C. Institute of Technology**.

How much will it cost?

There are two sources of costs - the service cost of preparing and handling the search, and the computer time charges. Preparation and handling costs will vary among the various institutions and the respective resource people should be consulted. The computing costs are those charged by the **Information/Knowledge Research Centre** of the **University of B.C.** for a variety of services:

1) Current Awareness Search
   Up to 100 most current entries of interest from each of CIJE and RIE are provided **$45**

2) Retrospective Search
A complete search of both CIJE and RIE is provided with no limit to the number of entries recovered unless specified $45
plus 5 cents per entry over 100

3) Special Bibliographies and Comprehensive Searches
This may involve production of special subject/author indexes and other tailor-made searches. Each search cost is negotiated at the time of determining the desired extent of the search.

How do I interpret the results of an ERIC search?

A computer-assisted search of the **ERIC** data base produces a printout which lists the journals and report documents located. A brief resumé, often loosely called an abstract, is provided for each journal article or report document listed on the printout. The journal resumes provide enough information to locate the full article if the journal concerned is part of a library collection accessable to you. The resumé often includes a brief abstract of the article and is identified by a reference 'EJ' number. The document resumés for reports include a brief abstract and a reference number called an 'ED' number. This is an accession number which is assigned to the document when it is processed so that it may be relocated easily. If **ERIC** has the right to duplicate the document, a microfiche copy is normally available. The accession number of the document is used to locate the corresponding microfiche. The University of B.C. has a complete microfiche collection from which copies may be obtained at a nominal cost. If you are unable to use the U.B.C. collection, microfiche and printed copies may be obtained from the current **ERIC** contractors or from the originator of the document. Complete ordering information is printed in copies of **RIE**. If **ERIC** is not the supplier, an address of the supplier will be included in the resumé.

Sample printout of a journal article resumé

EJ 052214 Apr. 2, 75

PUBLICATION DATE: Mar. 72

TITLE: Self-paced Introductory French at Prince George's Community College.

PERSONAL AUTHOR: Blanco, Marjorie Beatty; Charro, Mary English.

DESCRIPTOR: Autoinstructional Aids; Autoinstructional Programs; College Language Programs; *Experimental Teaching; French; *Independent Study; *Instructional Materials; *Language Instruction; Program Evaluation; Teaching Techniques.

JOURNAL CITATION: Foreign Language Annals; 5; 3; 350-352.

****END OF ABSTRACT****

Sample printout of a report resumé

ED 093360 Apr. 3, 75

PUBLICATION DATE: May 74

TITLE: Final Report on Cost Effectiveness of Continuing Engineering Studies by Television.

PERSONAL AUTHOR: Morris, Albert . ; and others.

DESCRIPTOR: *Cost Effectiveness; Educational Television; *Engineering Education; Expenditure per Student; Extension Education; *Instructional Television; Professional Continuing Education; Televised Instruction; *Television Surveys; Universities; Video Tape Recordings.

EDRS PRICE: EDRS Price MF-$0.75 HC-$1.85 plus postage.

DESCRIPTIVE NOTE: 44p.; Report by a task force of the Continuing Engineering Studies Division, American Society for Engineering Education.

ABSTRACT: Twenty-six university-based ITV systems, some live and some utilizing videotape, were identified and queried as part of a study on 'Cost Effectiveness of Continuing Engineering Studies by Television.' An analysis of these systems shows that, in properly planned, implemented, and mature systems, the cost of off-campus student instruction by TV can be significantly lower than serving the equivalent students on campus. By far most respondents, from both institutions and industry, report favorable experiences and attitudes toward their ITV involvement. Financial viability is made more likely when auditors - with or without grades and tests - and nonengineering courses are included in the program. The Stanford ITV System demonstrates the success possible. Finally, four hypothetical cases illustrate the need for cost studies and comprehensive planning before choosing any specific delivery approach. (WH).

****END OF ABSTRACT****

How is an **ERIC** computer search constructed?

The tools used in **ERIC** searching are:

1) the **Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors** which contains a list of **Descriptors**, a **Rotated Descriptor Display**, and a **Descriptor Group Display**,
2) the **ERIC Descriptor and Identifier Usage Report** which reports how many documents are listed under each descriptor and identifier, and,
3) simple Boolean algebra.

The specific steps involved in preparing a search are:

1) write a concise description of what information you seek,
   e.g. evaluation of reading programmes for college students who have English as a second language.
2) select the key nouns or noun phrases in the description,
   e.g. for the example above: evaluation, reading programmes, college students, English as a second language.

3) consult the **Thesaurus** to locate descriptors coinciding with the key words selected above. Note that your choice of words may produce words or phrases which are not precisely what appears in the **ERIC** list of approved descriptors. For the example above, the **Thesaurus** contains: evaluation, reading programs, college students, English (second language). In addition, to broaden the search, there are a further 10 to 15 descriptors which could be used along with the four chosen.
4) consult any documents from previous searches in the same field or relevant articles or documents for ideas of possible additional descriptors.
5) use the Boolean algebra logic to connect the descriptors into a logical search.

The Boolean logic used to construct **ERIC** searches employs three concepts:

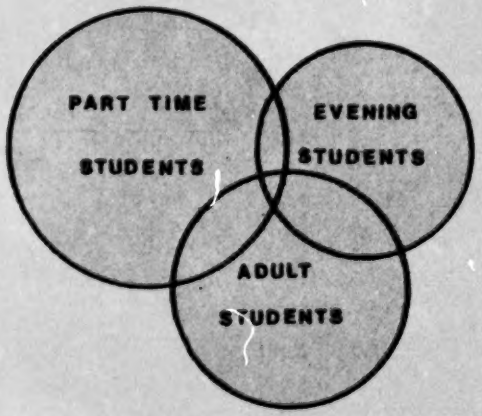
1) the union or grouping together of selected descriptors to produce what could be called a combined or chained descriptor. This operation is communicated to the computer with the symbol **.OR.** Note that the two periods are essential parts of the symbol.

Example

If you are interested in some aspect of teaching at the tertiery level and have selected the descriptor Part Time Students as the one best describing your students, you may be eliminating some documents catalogued under related but different descriptors such as Evening Students or Adult Students. To provide a more inclusive search, these three descriptors are linked together using the **.OR.** symbol:

Part Time Students.OR.Evening Students.OR.Adult Students

This is equivalent to adding the sets of documents for the three descriptors together to create a larger set. Diagramatically, this looks like:



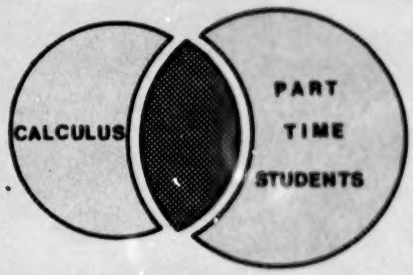
2) the intersection of descriptors or descriptor groups to select from both only those documents carrying both descriptors. This operation uses the symbol .AND.

Example

If you wish to locate documents dealing specifically with the teaching of calculus to part time students you could obtain the documents you wished simply by requesting all documents dealing with either calculus or part time students. However, this is inefficient because of the possible three or four thousand documents you would receive, only about twenty or so are likely to be on the requested topic. What you need is a method for selecting only those documents bearing both descriptors. This is done by giving the search command:

Calculus.AND.Part Time Students

or, diagrammatically,

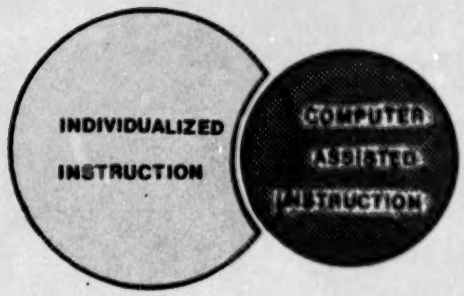


3) the exclusion of unwanted documents from broad descriptor groups to increase the precision of the search. The symbol used is **.NOT.**

Example

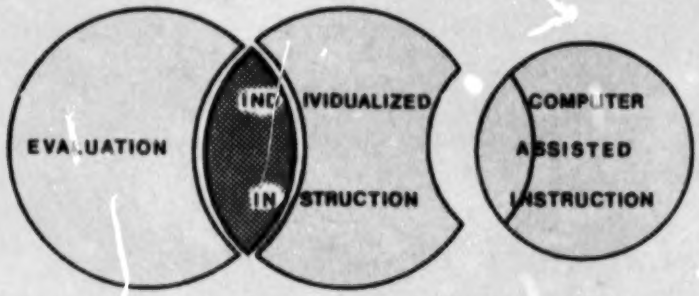
If you wish to obtain documents describing evaluation of a wide range of individualized instruction programmes but do not wish any references to computer assisted instruction the search is constructed in two stages. First, the **.NOT.** symbol is used to remove all computer assisted instruction documents from the individualized instruction set.

Individualized Instruction.NOT.Computer Assisted Instruction



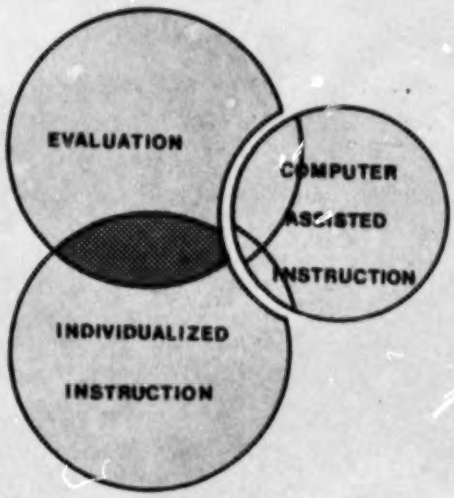
Then the resulting combination is intersected with the Evaluation set. Note the use of parentheses to separate the two sets so that the exclusion is applied only where desired.

Evaluation.AND.(Individualized Instruction.NOT.Computer Assisted Instruction)



An alternate description which would produce similar results is:

(Evaluation.AND.Individualized Instruction).NOT.Computer Assisted Instruction



Two additional symbols are used in constructing the searches. The dollar sign (**$**) must always be entered as the last symbol in the search description to signify the end of the search. Parentheses are used to group descriptors into logical patterns which can be recognized by the computer programme. The following parentheses rules must be followed:

1) the same number of left and right parentheses must be used,

2) when two or more **.AND.** and **.NOT.** symbols are used a set of parentheses is required around each pair of individual or sets of descriptors connected by **.AND.** or **.NOT.** logic. This condition does not apply to the use of the **.OR.** symbol,

3) when **.AND.** or **.NOT.** are used to connect a set of descriptors to another set or to a single descriptor, parentheses are required around each set.

Some examples of correctly used parentheses are:

1. OR logic only	A.OR.B.OR.C	Parentheses not necessary.
2. OR and NOT	(A.OR.B.OR.C) .NOT.D (A.OR.B.OR.C.) .NOT. (D.OR.E)	
3. one AND only	A.AND. (B.OR.C) (A.OR.B) .AND.C (A.OR.B) .AND. (C.OR.D) A.OR.B.AND. (C.OR.D)	These two equations are equivalent.
4. one AND; one NOT	(A.AND.B) .NOT.C A.AND. (B.NOT.C)	These two equations are equivalent.
5. two ANDs	A.AND. (B.AND.C) (A.AND.B) .AND.C	These two equations are equivalent.
	A.AND.(B.AND. (C.OR.D)) A.AND. (B.OR. (C.AND.D)) A.AND. ((B.OR.C) .AND. (D.OR.E))	
6. three ANDs	A.AND. (B.AND. (C.AND.D))	

ERIC Indexes

The **ERIC** system produces two printed indexes each month, one for documents and one for journal articles. The indexes are organized to facilitate current awareness surveys and literature searches.

The *Current Index to Journals in Education* (**CIJE**) lists the journal articles entered into the **ERIC** data base. The main sections of CIJE are Main Entry Section, Subject Index, Author Index, and Journal Contents Index. The Main Entry Section is divided into groups of articles, each group consisting of those processed by a specific Clearinghouse. Each entry contains author, title, and journal information, a list of descriptors and identifiers, and a brief resume of the article. The entries are assigned a Clearinghouse Accession Number and an **ERIC** Journal Accession Number (the **"EJ"** number) and are arranged numerically. The EJ number is used for cross-referencing and is considered to be the main accession number.

The Subject Index provides an alphabetical listing of each major descriptor and identifier appearing in the Main Entry Section. Collected under each subject heading are all the articles in the Main Entry Section carrying that term as a major descriptor or identifier. Enough information is provided to allow the location of the journal containing the article or the abstract in the Main Entry Section. The Author Index is an alphabetical list of all authors appearing in the Main Entry Section. Only article titles and EJ numbers are provided. The Journal Contents Index provides an alphabetical list of journals whose articles appear in the Main Entry Section. Under each journal are given article titles and EJ numbers to allow a cross reference to the Main Entry Section.

Typical users develop selective lists of descriptors, authors, and journals of interest to them. By consulting the Subject, Author, and Journal Contents Indexes users can readily be alerted to articles of potential interest and, by using EJ number, can locate expanded resumes in the Main Entry Section.

The *Resources in Education* (RIE) index is similar to CIJE but is restricted to non-journal documents. RIE has sections for document resumes, subject index, author index, and institution index. Documents are located by ERIC Document Accession Numbers ("ED" numbers) in the same way as articles are located by EJ numbers. In many cases the ED number will lead directly to microfiche copies of the desired document.

Some recent references describing **ERIC**

Fry, Bernard M.; Kiewitt, Eva L.
"The Educational Resources Information Center: Its Legal Basis, Organization, Distribution System, Bibliographic Controls",
Drexel Library Quarterly; 10; 1&2; 63-78

Johnson, John R.
"The Structure and Operation of **ERIC**"
22P.; Paper prepared for a seminar in scientific and technical information systems 55,750, ED 094789

O'Donnell, Bernard
"Let **ERIC** Help"
English Journal; 63; 1; 99-100

Purdy, Leslie; Boyer, Marcia
"**ERIC** Today"
Community and Junior College Journal; 44;9;11

ERIC: What It Can Do For You/How To Use It, James W. Brown and others, September 1975. ED 110 095.

Jewell, Sharon and W.T. Brandhorst. Search Strategy Tutorial; Searcher's Kit. 1973. 86 pp. ERIC ED 082 763.

Simmons, Robert M. A Library User's Guide to ERIC. Stanford, California: ERIC Clearinghouse on Information Resources, 1975. 31 pp. ERIC IR 002 211.

Yarborough, Judith. How to Prepare a Computer Search of ERIC. A Non-Technical Approach. Stanford, California: ERIC Clearinghouse on Information Resources, 1975. 41 pp. ERIC IR 002 414.

Common Search Construction Errors

The following search descriptions consist of correctly and incorrectly constructed searches. To check your understanding of search construction, carefully examine each search description using the Thesaurus and search logic, make any necessary corrections, and compare your work with the Comments on Page 11.

Example 1

Parental Attitudes.AND.Report Cards$

Example 2

Test.OR.Quizzes.OR.Pretests.AND.Spelling$

Example 3

(Skilled Labour.AND.Building Trades).AND.Job Tenure$

Example 4

((UniversitiesOR.Colleges).NOT.Private Colleges).AND.(Income
.AND.Federal Aid)$

Example 5

Evaluation.AND.Teaching

Example 6

Fire Science Education.AND.(Laboratory Experiments.OR.
Laboratory Safety)$

Example 7

((Task Analysis.OR.Task Performance).AND.Curriculum
Development).AND.(Technical Education.NOT.Health Education)$

Comments on search examples

Example 1

Parental attitudes is not an accepted descriptor. See the "Used For" **(UF)** note under Parent Attitudes. Parentheses are not required because you are not intersecting more than two descriptors.

Example 2

Quizzes is not an accepted descriptor. See Tests under **"RT"** (Related Terms) for additional descriptors you can use in place of Quizzes if you wish to broaden the search. No parentheses are required because the descriptors connected by **.OR.** can be considered as a combined descriptor formed by the union of several "smaller" descriptors.

Example 3

Skilled Labour must be spelled exactly as shown in the Thesaurus which lists Skilled Labor.

Example 4

The first **.OR.** is missing a period. The rest of the search is correctly constructed although the choice of the descriptor **"Income"** may be inappropriate. If a more accurate description of revenue cannot be obtained the search should be made to see if the type of document retrieved is acceptable. If not, another approach to the problem is required.

Example 5

The **$** is omitted. Also, both descriptors are very broad and appear many thousands of times in the **ERIC** file. For most purposes, the search is too broad. The Narrower Terms **(NT)** and Related Terms **(RT)** for both Evaluation and Teaching should be consulted to see if a more precise search, representing fewer documents, can be constructed.

Example 6

The search is correctly constructed but is unnecessarily narrow. **Fire Science Education** has less than 100 documents in the **ERIC** file. If the search is run as shown, the number of retrieved documents may be less than ten while others of possible interest in a fire science programme will be missed. The **ERIC Descriptor and Identifier Usage Report** will provide an estimate of the number of documents indexed under each descriptor.

Example 7

The search is correctly constructed and should produce a useful number of documents without too much "chaff".

TO ORDER ERIC DOCUMENTS

Orders for microfiche or hardcopy must be accompanied by payment. Address your orders to: ERIC Document Reproduction Service, P.O. Box 190, Arlington, Virginia 22210. Always order by ED number. Individual Clearinghouses cannot fill these requests. Computer Microfilm International Corporation, the firm handling these orders, requests that 18c postage be included for each document. For documents with IR numbers, first obtain the ED number from the ERIC Clearinghouse on Information Resources or the proper issue of Resources in Education before ordering.

Embry, Jonathan D., Wesley T. Brandhorst, and Harvey Marron. Survey of ERIC Data Base Search Services. Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Education, 1974. 27 pp. ERIC ED 094 750. 1976 Edition now available. - - - ERIC ED 124 172

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a. If Customer fails with respect to this or any other agreement with CMIC to pay any invoice when due or to accept any shipment as ordered, CMIC may without prejudice to other remedies defer any further shipments until the default is corrected, or cancel this Purchase Order.
b. No course of conduct nor any delay of CMIC in exercising any right hereunder shall waive any rights of CMIC or modify this Agreement.

10. GOVERNING LAW
This Agreement shall be construed to be between merchants. Any question concerning its validity, construction, or performance shall be governed by the laws of the State of New York.

11. DEPOSIT ACCOUNTS
Customers who have a continuing need for ERIC documents may open a Deposit account by depositing a minimum of $200.00. Once a deposit account is opened, ERIC documents will be sent upon request, and the account charged for the actual cost and postage. A monthly statement of the account will be furnished.

12. STANDING ORDER ACCOUNTS
Customers who desire to receive microfiche copies of all ERIC reports announced in each issue of Resources in Education may do so by depositing $2000.00 or submitting an executed purchase order. The cost of each issue and postage will be charged against the account. A monthly statement of the account will be furnished.

13. PAPER COPY (HC)
A paper copy (HC) is xerographic reproduction, on paper, of the original document. Each paper copy has a Vellum Bristol cover to identify and protect the document.

14. FOREIGN POSTAGE
Postage for all countries other than the United States is based on the international Postal Rates in effect at the time the order is shipped. To determine postage allow 60 microfiche or 60 (HC) pages per pound. Customers must specify the exact classification of mail desired, and include the postage for that classification with their order. Payment must be in United States funds.

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